

Brian Milne's *Rights of the Child. 25 Years After the Adoption of the UN Convention*. Heidelberg: Springer, 2015. 225pp., £90.00 (h/b), ISBN 9783319187839

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Brian Milne's book was thought of as both an assessment of the rights of the child since their adoption by the UN Convention in 1989 (CRC), and as an homage to his joint work with the late Judith Ennew on this topic. This project was developed jointly with Ennew but after her death in 2013, Milne continued working on it by himself. The book is intended as a detailed account of the CRC since its adoption till today. It looks at the historical process that put it together; the political, economic and social factors that have affected it (positively and negatively) during the last quarter-century; and analyses how it has been implemented and interpreted in national and international policies, and by children themselves. It includes an appendix with some of the most relevant international conventions and charters on children's rights (all the fundamental UN Documents, and the African Charter).

Among the most relevant deficiencies that Milne sees in the present state of CRC, there are: on the one hand, the dangers of not balancing its universal aspirations with the realities of children; and, on the other, the problem of including children only as passive recipients, rather than as active participants in the social and political processes that affect them. CRC promotes the active inclusion of children, but Milne's analysis shows that this has been used more as a rhetorical device rather than as a sincere commitment.

The author's objective was to present a "realistic but not always critical review" of the evolution of CRC (6). Although some of the chapters do follow this descriptive/realist objective, especially when he deals with the historical development and quantitative analysis of children's rights and their protection; most of the book takes a strong critical stance towards the current interpretation and implementation of CRC, sometimes being covered by the "descriptive" aim of the book. Milne intends to analyse the whole Convention and its impact on policy-making, but his study focuses more on its deficiencies rather than its positive outcomes. If read as a critical assessment rather than as a descriptive project, the book offers great insight into the various dimensions of child rights (philosophical, political, economic and historical), and on the potential role of children as active participants in political life.